

WHAT IS SoTL?

The scholarship of teaching and learning or SoTL integrates teaching, learning and research with the intent to improve teaching practice and student learning in a variety of disciplines as well as to expand the body of knowledge about teaching and learning in higher education. UNIMAS has given priority to SoTL as a means to recognise teaching as a scholarly activity and to achieve excellence in education and training.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SoTL

- 👉 a systematic inquiry or research into student learning
- 👉 asking interesting questions that are typically derived from challenges in teaching and/or student learning
- 👉 employing a methodology that reflects the questions and the researcher's expertise to seek answers to the questions
- 👉 sharing of insights gained either formally or informally or formally

WHY DO SoTL?

SOME OF THE REASONS FOR CONDUCTING SoTL STUDIES:

Gain understanding



One of the main reasons for conducting SoTL studies is to gain better insight into problems in teaching and learning through systematic inquiry. The SoTL practitioners need to employ appropriate research methods to produce tangible analyses of student learning. The SoTL enables hypothesis of the learning design be tested systematically and innovations to be produced, applied and evaluated in a systematic manner.

Involve disciplinary experts



Acknowledging the need for interdisciplinary SoTL or exploring of teaching and learning issues for specific disciplines, academics from all disciplines are appropriate to involve in SoTL.

Expand knowledge



The SoTL also emphasises the sharing of knowledge gained through such exploration via informal speaking with colleagues, presenting at local, national or international conferences and or seminars, and publishing. Such public sharing among communities of interest encourages continuous review, critique, adoption as well as cumulatively builds on knowledge about teaching-learning.

Improve practice



The insights gained via the SoTL help to improve the teaching and learning of those who practice it. The sharing of the SoTL outcomes and best practices may also benefit other instructors, either from similar or different institutions.

HOW TO DO SoTL?

STEPS TO CONDUCT SoTL

GETTING STARTED

- Identify a teaching and/or learning related problem
- Define the area of focus or type of research

CONDUCTING A LITERATURE REVIEW

- Review relevant concepts or theories, and past studies

DOING ETHICAL RESEARCH

- Be sensitive to the ethical issues of your work with students
- Protect students' privacy and confidentiality, as well as minimise any risks (most often, risks to grades)

IDENTIFYING EVIDENCE

- Possible evidence of student learning also comes in a variety of forms, such as:
 - Student outcomes, e.g. formative and summative assessments, student work (textual, oral and visual), classroom techniques, etc.
 - Student perception, e.g. course evaluation, teacher evaluation, interviews, etc.
 - Peer review, e.g. classroom observation, peer talks to students, etc.
 - Self-evaluation, e.g. teaching journal, field note book, reflective course memo, portfolio, etc.

PLANNING THE PROJECT DESIGN

- Explore various methodological approaches, such as action research, self-study, narrative research, case study research, grounded theory research, classroom ethnography, implementation analysis, phenomenological study, programme development, evaluation research, survey research, longitudinal study research, computational methods, etc.

ANALYSING DATA

- Gather multiple sources of data (quantitative and qualitative)
- Use a variety of inquiry tools (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, attitude scales, etc.)
- Include the process of validity and reliability of data as well as ethical considerations.
- Extend the analysis by raising questions
- Connect findings to personal experiences
- Seek advice from critical friends
- Contextualise the findings in literature and theory

GOING PUBLIC

- Publish the results of the project (e.g. teaching and learning bulletin, book chapter, journal paper)
- Present the work as part of the internal knowledge sharing session or in a conference / seminar

CONSIDERING QUALITY

Benchmarks for basic standards of quality according to Felten (2013) are:

- 1) Applied the principles of good practice in SoTL
- 2) Inquiry focused on student learning
- 3) Grounded in context
- 4) Methodological sound
- 5) Conducted in partnership with students
- 6) Appropriately public